

Message Text

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47

ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 289

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

USCINCSO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, HO

SUBJECT: DECLARATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 1818

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE TRADITIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES ISSUED A DECLARATION CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE LEGAL ACTION AGAINST THE TELA RAILWAY COMPANY. THE DECLARATION STATED THAT AGRARIAN REFORM AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE NATION AND THE BANANA COMPANIES REQUIRED A CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT. THE DECLARATION IS THE LATEST IN A SERIES DESIGNED TO PRESENT THE OPINIONS OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES TO THE PUBLIC. END SUMMARY.

1. THE NATIONALIST AND LIBERAL PARTIES ISSUED A JOINT DECLARATION WHICH APPEARED IN THE JUNE 7 PRESS. THE MAIN POINTS OF THE DECLARATION FOLLOW:

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A. THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD TAKE ALL POSSIBLE LEGAL STEPS TO INSURE THAT THE UNITED BRANDS SUBSIDIARY, TELA RAILWAY COMPANY, BE FORCED TO INDEMNIFY THE COUNTRY FOR DAMAGE CAUSED BY THE BRIBE;

B. ONLY THROUGH SUCH ACTION CAN THE NATION BREAK THE HOLD OF UNITED BRANDS OVER THE COUNTRY'S FUTURE;

C. THE UNCULTIVATED OR UNUSED LAND OF UNITED BRANDS SHOULD BE TURNED OVER TO THE CAMPESINOS UNDER THE TERMS OF THE AGRARIAN REFORM LAW;

D. THE TWO ALTERNATIVES CONFRONTING THE COUNTRY ARE TO NATIONALIZE THE BANANA COMPANIES OR REVISE THE EXISTING CONCESSIONS TO BENEFIT THE NATION;

E. NATIONALIZATION REQUIRES THAT HONDURAS HAVE THE HUMAN RESOURCES, FINANCIAL RESOURCES, SUFFICIENT MEANS OF TRANSPORT AND ABILITY TO SELL ON THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET IF IT IS NOT TO BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE FOR THE COUNTRY;

F. GENERAL LOPEZ' ACTIONS IN THE BRIBERY SCANDAL SHOULD BE CAREFULLY SCRUTINIZED TO DETERMINE HIS GUILT OR INNOCENCE;

G. RECENT LAND INVASIONS RETARD THE CARRYING OUT OF NEEDED LAND REFORMS;

H. THE NATIONAL AGRARIAN INSTITUTE HAS SHOWN ITSELF TO BE INCAPABLE OF EXECUTING THE AGRARIAN REFORM PROGRAM;

I. ONLY A CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT IS TRULY CAPABLE OF CARRYING OUT A FEASIBLE AGRARIAN REFORM AND OF ESTABLISHING A CORRECT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE COUNTRY AND THE BANANA COMPANIES; AND

J. IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE PRESENT DE FACTO GOVERNMENT ESTABLISH A TIME SCHEDULE FOR A RETURN TO FREE ELECTIONS AND A CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT.

2. COMMENT: THE POLITICAL PARTIES ARE DOING WHAT THEY CAN TO KEEP THEMSELVES IN THE PUBLIC GAZE DURING THIS PERIOD OF NATIONAL TURMOIL. OBVIOUSLY THEY DO NOT WANT TO BE CAST AS DEFENDERS OF THE COMPANIES, A TAG THAT THE LEFTIST STUDENTS AND LABOR UNIONS WOULD BE MORE THAN HAPPY TO PIN ON THEM. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, THEY WANT TO POINT OUT THE COMPLEXITY OF NATIONALIZING THE COMPANIES GIVEN HONDURAS' SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITION. THE CALL FOR A RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONALITY IS A CONTINUATION OF THEIR LONG-STANDING CAMPAIGN TO BRING ABOUT A RETURN WITHIN THE RELATIVELY NEAR FUTURE TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FREE ELECTIONS CONTESTED BY THE PARTIES.
SANCHEZ

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